Jun 7, 2022

Colorado State Board of Education Directors

201 East Colfax Avenue

Denver, Colorado 80203

RE: State Board of Education May 24, 2022 Order for Adams 14 School District

Dear Colorado State Board of Education Members,

We were collectively encouraged following your decision on April 14, 2022, and subsequently surprised, and deeply disappointed, by your decision on May 10, 2022 and your order that followed on May 24, 2024.

We believe collectively in locally elected school boards of education and their Colorado constitutional right to the local control of the instruction of their students.

Further, and more importantly to the purpose of this letter, the undersigned members of the Denver Area School Superintendents’ Council (DASSC) strongly support Superintendent, Dr. Karla Loria, her team, and the Adams 14 School District Board of Education as they begin their collective work on behalf of the students and community of Adams 14 with their new partner, TNTP.

During her lengthy and successful career, Dr. Loria has increased student achievement in highly impacted schools in Nevada, Texas, Colorado, California, and North Carolina. She has the experience and skills necessary to lead the changes all of you, and all of us, know are necessary for the students and families in Adams 14.

Leading change is challenging and difficult work. Respectfully, you have made that work more difficult for Dr. Loria, her team, and the Adams 14 Board of Education, as you have moved from one Sword of Damocles to another.

The first sword this spring was leading under the threat of the revocation of their accreditation. As of May 24, that is no longer a threat. Your action demeans every student, parent, and staff member in the school district.

The second sword is the threat of district reorganization under the School District Organization Act of 1992, a thirty year-old statute that has no past precedent and no chance of actually happening. The process will take months, if not years, all while the sword hangs by a thread over the heads of Dr. Loria, her team, the Adams 14 Board of Education, and most significantly, the students and community of Adams 14.

As stated previously, Dr. Loria has successfully increased student achievement in highly impacted school districts across the country. She is uniquely qualified to serve and lead change in Adams 14 for its students and community.

Seventy-two percent of students in Adams 14 qualify for free or reduced lunches compared to the state average of thirty-seven percent. Ninety-one percent of Adams 14 students are students of color compared to the state average of forty-eight percent.

The majority of the students of color in Adams 14 are Hispanic and many speak Spanish as their first language. As Dr. Loria so eloquently stated at the April 14 hearing, these students should not be termed second language learners, but as “linguistically gifted.”

Dr. Loria reports that she and her team spent nearly 325 hours this past school year engaging in meetings, visits, state board hearings/meetings, etc. directed by members of the Colorado Department of Education staff members or the State Board of Education.

This equates to 40 days, or roughly one day out of every four days of instruction. It is difficult to lead change in schools if you are not in schools and/or distracted by external (state) issues and demands.

Dr. Loria, her team, and the Adams 14 Board of Education have work to do on behalf of the students and community of Adams 14. It is work that they are more than capable of accomplishing for the benefit of their students and community.

The undersigned members of the Denver Area School Superintendents Council ask that you allow them to do so without turning the accreditation process into a sword to hang above their head. Rescind your order from May 24, 2022 and allow the team in Adams 14 to do the work necessary for their students.

Respectfully,

Brian Ewert - Littleton Public Schools (DASSC Co-Chair)

Chris Fiedler - 27J Schools (DASSC Co-Chair)

Rob Anderson - Boulder Valley School District

Charlotte Ciancio - Mapleton Public Schools

Chris Gdowski - Adams 12 Five Star Schools

David MacKenzie - Gilpin County Schools

Alex Marrero - Denver Public Schools

Rico Munn - Aurora Public Schools

Karen Quanbeck- Clear Creek School District RE-1

Wendy Rubin - Englewood Public Schools

Pat Sandos - Sheridan Public Schools

Chris Smith - Cherry Creek Schools

Pam Swanson - Westminster Public Schools